

Nicholas Returns to Business 809

"Quite," said Nicholas, shaking him by both hands.

"Ah!" said Tim, "you look tired though, now I come to look at you. Hark! there he is, d'ye hear him? That was Dick, the blackbird. He hasn't been himself, since you've been gone. He'd never get on without you, now; he takes as naturally to you, as he does to me."

"Dick is a far less sagacious fellow than I supposed him, if he thinks I am half so well worthy of his notice as you," replied Nicholas.

"Why, I'll tell you what, sir," said Tim, standing in his favourite attitude and pointing to the cage with the feather of his pen, "it's a very extraordinary thing about that bird, that the only people he ever takes the smallest notice of, are Mr. Charles, and Mr. Ned, and you, and me."

Here, Tim stopped and glanced anxiously at Nicholas; then unexpectedly catching his eye repeated, "And you and me, sir, and you and me." And then he glanced at Nicholas again, and, squeezing his hand, said, "I am a bad one at putting off anything I am interested in. I didn't mean to ask you, but I should like to hear a few particulars about that poor boy. Did he mention Cheeryble Brothers at all?"

"Yes," said Nicholas, "many and many a time."

"That was right of him," returned Tim, wiping his eyes; "that was very right of him."

"And he mentioned your name a score of times," said Nicholas, "and often bade me carry back his love to Mr. Linkinwater."

"No, no, did he though?" rejoined Tim, sobbing outright. "Poor fellow! I wish we could have had him buried in town. There isn't such a burying-ground in all London, as that little one on the other side of the square—there are counting-houses all round it, and if you go in there, on a fine day, you can see the books and safes through the open windows. And he sent his love to me, did he? I didn't expect he would have thought of me. Poor fellow, poor fellow! His love too!"

Tim was so completely overcome by this little mark of recollection, that he was quite unequal to any more conversation at the moment. Nicholas therefore slipped quietly out, and went to brother Charles's room.

If he had previously sustained his firmness and fortitude, it had been by an effort which had cost him no little pain;